DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 108 726 JC 750 399

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TITLE At Large: The General College Reading/Writing Skills Center and Its Satellites, 1974-75.
INSTITUTION Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. General Coll.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 25p.
JOURNAL CIT General College Studies; v11 n4 1974-75

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Basic Reading; Communication Skills; Correctional Education; *Junior Colleges; Prisoners; *Reading Centers; Remedial Reading Clinics; *Satellite Laboratories; *Tutorial Programs; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS Minnesota General College

ABSTRACT

Since its opening in the spring of 1972, the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center has provided students with tutorial help in reading and writing, and communication skills courses for credit. During its three years of operation, the Skills Center has extended its services through satellite centers to student populations other than those served in the base center. During the period covered by this report, the satellite centers included Pilot City Skills Center in North Minneapolis, St. Paul Community Programs Skills Center in the Summit-University area of St. Paul, the Minneapolis Workhouse Skills Center in Wayzata, Stillwater Prison Skills Center in Bayport, and the Extension Classes Skills Center on campus. This report reviews the services offered by the daytime General College Skills Center and by each of the satellite centers. Tables indicate the number of students served and the number of faculty employed by each center. Descriptions of funding sources and proposals, as well as anecdotal materials about the program are appended. (Author/DC)

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Volume XI, Number 4 1974-75

ED108726

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At Large:

The General College Reading/Writing Skills Center and Its Satellites, 1974-75

By Vernelle Kurak

Since its tentative beginning as an experimental project in the spring of 1972, the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center has established itself as a vital support service in the General College's total educational effort. As an innovative attempt to enhance the learning opportunities of General College students, the Skills Center won immediate and continuing acceptance from the clientele it was designed to serve. From its origins, and during its subsequent expansion, the Skills Center has been the object of intense study and evaluation. This issue of The General College Studies presents another in a series of reports on Skills Center activities in recent years.

Readers who peruse the full report will note that, from modest beginnings, the Skills Center has flourished and its activities have ramified in several directions. Thus, in addition to including data on the regular daytime General College Skills Center, this report also presents facts and figures referring to evening skills centers, skills centers at various sites off-campus, and skills center special projects underwritten by all-University, state and federal grants. Taken as a whole, the data presented here give an impressive picture of the Skills Center's educational impact at the University and in the community at large.

The author of this report is the Coordinator of the Reading/Writing Skills Center and an instructor in the General College Arts, Communication, and Philosophy Division.

JC 750 399

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At Large:

The General College Reading/Writing Skills Center and Its Satellites, 1974-75

By Vernelle Kurak

Introduction

Since its opening in the spring of 1972, the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center has provided students with tutorial help in reading and writing, and communication skills courses for credit. During its three years of operation, the Skills Center has extended its services through satellite skills centers to student populations other than those served in the base center. (Satellite skills centers are so called because, although they each had their origin in the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center and are staffed from the parent center, they are otherwise different, even from each other.)

During the period covered by this report,[1] the satellite centers included Pilot City Skills Center in North Minneapolis, St. Paul Community Programs Skills Center in the Summit-University area of St. Paul, the Minneapolis Workhouse Skills Center in Wayzata, Stillwater Prison Skills Center in Bayport, and the Extension Classes Skills Center on campus.

Since the number of students served by the Skills Center and its satellites is one indication of its success, this report contains many figures. However, since the uniqueness of the Skills Center lies in the quality of its services, this report also attempts to convey some of that quality. To that end, anecdotal material is included in an appendix following the formal report; another appendix gives some examples of Skills Center "extracurricular" activities.

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[1]This report is primarily devoted to Skills Center operations during 1974-75. However, as a means of indicating the scope of Skills Center activities, some information included here also refers to the 1973-74 academic years, as well as to spring, 1974, summer, 1974, and summer, 1975. During these periods, activities were carried on which, in one way or another, relate to the 1974-75 academic year.

I. Daytime General College Skills Center

The original Reading/Writing Skills Center, begun as an experimental project of the Arts, Communication, and Philosophy Division of the General College in the spring of 1972 and continued every academic year to date (including first summer sessions), has been described in detail elsewhere.[2] Though, like the General College itself, Skills Center practices and activities have undergone changes from time to time, its basic design remains the same. Its function in the General College is still to provide immediately available tutorial services for walk-in students and to offer flexibly scheduled communications skills courses. The purpose of this section is to report statistical data about the services, the student clients, and the staff of the daytime Skills Center during 1974-75.

Types of Services

Walk-in - One-to-one tutorial assistance for any University student (and others) who voluntarily comes to the Skills Center and who may or may not be registered for a course through the Skills Center.

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, 3 credits

An auto-instructional programmed review of grammar and usage. No regularly scheduled classes. Under the supervision of the Skills Center staff, each enrolled student comes to the Skills Center at his own convenience to do exercises, take quizzes, and write papers.

GC 1409: Individual Study, 1 to 3 credits

With a Skills Center staff member as his monitor, each student writes a study contract describing a project he will undertake. Throughout the quarter, the student consults weekly with his project monitor, and writes a final report on, or demonstrates, his completed project.

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[2]Vernelle E. Messer, "The General College Reading and Writing Skills Center: Spring Quarter, 1972," The General College Studies, Vol. VIII, Number 2, 1971-72.

Vernelle E. Messer, "By the Numbers: Some Statistical Data about the Operations of the Reading and Writing Skills Center, Fall Quarter, 1972," The General College Studies, Vol. IX, Number 1, 1972-73.

GC 1429: Individual Study: Writing, 1 to 3 credits
Similar to GC 1409 except that the emphasis is on writing.

Table 1

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)

UTAs	12
TAs	3
Instructors	3
Others	1*

*Associate Professor, winter quarter, 1975

Table 2

	# of students	# of walk-ins	# of credits
Fall, 1974			
GC 1405	44		132
GC 1409	11		21
GC 1429	0		0
Walk-in		440	
Subtotal:	55		153
Winter, 1975			
GC 1405	50		150
GC 1409	19		39
GC 1429	3		6
Walk-in		390	
Subtotal:	72		195
Spring, 1975			
GC 1405	53		159
GC 1409	17		36
GC 1429	6		12
Walk-in		300*	
Subtotal:	76		207
TOTAL	203	1130	555

Estimated

II. CEE Extension Classes Skills Center, Evening

The services of the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center were first made available to CEE Evening Class students in the fall of 1973 under the terms of an all-University Educational Development grant. Since then, on the basis of CEE Evening Classes student acceptance of Skills Center services, an Extension Classes Skills Center has operated continuously throughout the academic year. Open from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday every week, the Skills Center provides services underwritten by tuition fees paid by CEE students enrolled in Skills Center courses. CEE Extension Classes students make the same use of the Skills Center as University daytime students. Indeed, as patterns of enrollment change, it is not uncommon for the clientele to intermix: daytime students sometimes come to the evening Skills Center, and evening students frequently take advantage of the longer hours that the Skills Center is open during the day.

Types of services

Walk-in - Similar to daytime service

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, 3 credits

Same as daytime

GC 1409: Individual Study: Communication Skills, 2 credits

Similar to daytime except that the number of credits is not variable without special College permission. Work may be done in conjunction with another Extension Classes course.

GC 1429: Individual Study: Writing, 2 credits

Similar to GC 1409, above, with emphasis on writing.

Table 3

(CEE Evening)

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)

UTAs	4
TAs	5
Instructors	1

Table 4

(CEE Evening)

	# of students	# of walk-ins	# of credits
Fall, 1974			
GC 1405	23		69
GC 1409	19		22
GC 1429	16		32
Walk-in		25	
Subtotal:	55		123
Winter, 1975			
GC 1405	24		72
GC 1409	26		27
GC 1429	29		58
Walk-in		30	
Subtotal:	79		157
Spring, 1975			
GC 1405	29		87
GC 1409	20		40
GC 1429	25		50
Walk-in		40*	
Subtotal:	74		177
TOTAL	208	95	457

*Estimated

III. Stillwater Prison Skills Center, Bayport, Minnesota

The Skills Center at Stillwater State Prison, Bayport, Minnesota is a joint project of the General College and CEE Community Programs, operating with a grant under the provisions of the U.S. Higher Education Act, Title I. Funds were provided on the basis of a proposal prepared by Carol Olson, Director of CEE Community Programs, and Vernelle E. Kurak, Coordinator of General College Reading/Writing Skills Center, submitted in the spring of 1974. The $9,650.00 award is for the period July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975. Under the terms of the grant, Skills Center services--including three courses, GC 1401: Vocabulary Building, GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, and GC 1409: Individual Study-- are offered to interested inmates at Stillwater State Prison.

As an ancillary service, two trained academic counselors, in addition to occasionally serving as tutors, provide inmates with information about program planning, inter-college credit transfer, and degree applications.

In one way or another, the Skills Center presence at Stillwater State Prison has resulted in the following educational developments on behalf of the inmates:

1. The offering of an Ojibwe language class, AmIn 1021: Beginning Ojibwe.

2. The training of prisoners in the use of audio-visual equipment already available to them.

3. The enrollment in the CEE Community Programs St. Paul evening classes of student-inmates from the prison farm. (Inmates are bused with escort into the St. Paul community for classes one evening a week.)

4. The inauguration of regular meetings of representatives from the various colleges that have educational programs at Stillwater Prison. (No such meetings were held before.)

5. The establishment of a method whereby inmate Human Services Generalist students may do their internships while still incarcerated.

6. The expediting of a means for two inmate-students to apply for and receive their AA degrees from the General College.

7. The supervision in the prison of a St. Catherine's College student's interim project.

8. The maintenance of liaison between Stillwater inmates and representatives of other University departments, such as UWW, Art History, and Independent Study.

Types of services

Walk-in - Service is available but potential clients are limited by prison regulations.

GC 1401: Vocabulary Building, 3 credits

Under the supervision of a tutor, a student is introduced to college-level general vocabulary by means of dictionary study, word games, and exercises.

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, 3 credits
Same as daytime.

GC 1409: Individual Study, 2 credits
Same as Extension Classes Skills Center.

Table 5
(Stillwater)

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)

UTAs	5
TAs	2
Instructors	1
Other	3*

*Regular academic counselors also employed by CEE on campus

Table 6

(Stillwater)

	# of students	# of credits
Fall, 1974		
GC 1405	11	33
GC 1409	5	10
GC 1429		
Subtotal:	16	43
Winter, 1975		
GC 1405	13	39
GC 1409	8	19
GC 1429		
Subtotal:	21	58
Spring, 1975		
GC 1401	3*	9
GC 1405	10*	30
GC 1409	5*	10
GC 1429		
Subtotal:	18	49
TOTAL	55	150

*Estimated

IV. Minneapolis Workhouse Skills Center, Wayzata, Minnesota

During the 1973-74 academic year, a Skills Center operated regularly at the Minneapolis Workhouse under the auspices of Project Newgate. Because of budget cutbacks, Project Newgate's support was withdrawn from the Minneapolis Workhouse for 1974-75. However, a citizens' group from the Minneapolis American Indian community obtained funding from the Governor's Crime Commission to maintain an educational and social services program at the Workhouse. The Skills Center was asked by the American Indian community governing board to participate in the Workhouse program during the 1974-75 school year. Under the supervision of the Coordinator of the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center, a joint CEE/GC staff spent one day a week at the Workhouse tutoring inmates in study skills.

Types of services

Walk-in - Similar to daytime service. (Since inmates' jail sentences are short--from one day to one year--Skills Center tutors encourage walk-in inmates to continue their studies on campus after their release.)

Table 7

(Minneapolis Workhouse)

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)	
UTAs	1
TAs	0
Instructors	1
Others	1*

*Teaching Specialist on loan from CEE Community Programs

Table 8

(Minneapolis Workhouse)

Fall, 1974	
Walk-ins	55
Winter, 1975	
Walk-ins	56
Spring, 1975	
Walk-ins	55*
TOTAL	166

*Estimated

V. Madelia Project: On-campus and Madelia, Minnesota

In the winter of 1974, Mr. Anthony Zaragoza, President of the League United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), asked the University of Minnesota to make Skills Center services available to Spanish-speaking residents of the Madelia, Minnesota area. During spring quarter of 1974, a group of nine students commuted to the campus from Madelia one evening a week to study spoken and written English

in the Skills Center. Starting fall quarter, 1974, and continuing through spring, 1975, a similar group enrolled in GC 1409: Individual Study and spent one day a week on campus. Under the supervision of bi-lingual Skills Center staff members, the Madelia students studied English and engaged in other activities designed to improve their facility in the language and to familiarize them with the customs of the United States. From time to time, the coordinator of the Skills Center and the staff members participating in the Madelia project traveled to Madelia to maintain liaison with the Spanish-speaking community there and to confer with representatives of the Madelia Adult Education Program.

Types of services

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, 3 credits

To begin fall quarter, 1975

GC 1409: Individual Study: Communication Skills, 1 to 8 credits

Madelia students enrolled in this course engage in a variety of activities. Under the supervision of a bi-lingual Skills Center staff member, for instance, they spend time in formal classroom sessions, take field trips to points of interest in the Twin Cities area, and visit private homes. During the winter quarter, 1975, they attended classroom sessions on American popular music. In the spring quarter, 1975, they enrolled in a speech course especially modified for Spanish-speaking people.

Table 9

(Madelia)

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)

UTAs	0*
TAs	1
Instructors	2
Others	1**

*On occasion, Madelia students consult with any Skills Center UTA on duty in the daytime Center.

**Assistant Professor, winter quarter, 1975

Table 10

(Medalia)

	# of students	# of credits
Fall, 1974		
GC 1409	5	40
Winter, 1975		
GC 1409	4	32
Spring, 1975		
GC 1409	4	32
TOTAL	13	104

VI. Summit-University Neighborhood, St. Paul, Minnesota

Since about 1973, CEE Community Programs has offered a series of tuition-free evening courses to residents of the Summit-University area in St. Paul. Beginning in the fall of 1974 and continuing throughout the 1974-75 academic year, one Skills Center course, GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, taught two evenings a week by a staff member of the daytime Skills Center, has been a part of the CEE Community Programs Summit-University curriculum. Like the GC 1405 offered to other students through the Skills Centers, Fundamentals of Usage and Style at Summit-University is a three credit flexibly scheduled course in which each student progresses at his own rate. Teaching methods include programmed instruction and individual one-to-one tutoring. Among the students enrolled in GC 1405 at Summit-University is a group of inmates from the Stillwater State Prison Farm who are bused into the Summit-University neighborhood once a week.

Types of services

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, 3 credits
Similar to daytime

Table 11

(Summit-University)

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)

UTAs	2
TAs	0
Instructors	1

Table 12

(Summit-University)

	# of students	# of credits
Fall, 1974		
GC 1405	24	72
Winter, 1975		
GC 1405	21	63
Spring, 1975		
GC 1405	35*	105*
TOTAL	80	240

*Estimated

VII. Pilot City Skills Center, North Minneapolis

For several years CEE Community Programs has offered a series of tuition-free evening courses to the residents of the Pilot City area of North Minneapolis. Beginning in the fall of 1973, continuing throughout the 1973-74 academic year, and during the fall, 1974 and winter, 1975 quarters, GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style and GC 1409: Individual Study have been offered alternately as a part of the CEE Community Programs Pilot City curriculum. During 1973-74, several UTAs and TAs trained in the General College daytime Skills Center taught GC 1405 and GC 1409 in the same manner that it is conducted at other Skills Centers. The Minneapolis Pilot City Skills Center also served as one of the training bases for the Skills Center tutor-training program carried on in the spring of 1974 by means of

a grant from the University's Small Grants Program. In the fall of 1974, GC 1405 was offered two evenings a week at Pilot City; during winter quarter, 1975, GC 1409 was offered one evening a week. During both quarters, the instructor was a TA trained in the General College daytime Skills Center

Types of services

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, 3 credits

Similar to daytime

Table 13

(Pilot City - Minneapolis)

Staff members: (all part-time; one or more quarters)

UTAs	0
TAs	1
Instructors	0
Others	1*

*Teaching Specialist from CEE Community Programs staff

Table 14

(Pilot City - Minneapolis)

	# of students	# of walk-ins	# of credits
Fall, 1974			
GC 1405	8		24
Walk-in			
Fall, 1975			
GC 1409	3		6
Walk-in	—		—
TOTAL	11		30

VIII. Miscellaneous

Beginning fall quarter, 1973, under the auspices of Project Newgate, a Skills Center began operating at the St. Cloud Reformatory for Men, St. Cloud, Minnesota. Once a week during the year, from three to six Skills Center staff members drove to St. Cloud to provide inmates with services similar to those available to GC daytime students. Courses offered included GC 1401: Vocabulary Building, GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style, GC 1409: Individual Study, and GC 1429: Individual Study: Writing. Skills Center activities at St. Cloud continued throughout the summer months until September 15, 1974. (A report on one kind of St. Cloud Skills Center activity is available elsewhere.[3]) Because of unexpected Project Newgate budget cutbacks, Skills Center plans to continue services at the St. Cloud Reformatory during 1974-75 did not materialize.

Though the Skills Center no longer operates at St. Cloud, many male Newgate students continue to take advantage of its services as they pursue their studies on campus.

Other Newgate students who make use of the Skills Center on campus comprise a group of females, some on early release from Shakopee Training School for Women and some "diversionary people" (those sent to a half-way house directly from court). Students in this group reside in the newly established Newgate House for Women in St. Paul. Though the time of their initial arrival on campus is unpredictable, the Skills Center's flexible scheduling makes it possible for them to enroll in a program of courses--such as GC 1405 and GC 1409--beginning any week of the academic quarter. Following an introductory period during which such students are registered for courses through the Skills Center, female Newgate students usually enroll the following quarter for a full load of General College courses.

Since response to Skills Center services among Newgate students, both male and female, is positive, it is likely that the Skills Center will continue to play a role in Project Newgate's educational programs.

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[3]Peggy Dreckman, "Peer Tutoring in a Skills Program," The General College Studies, Vol. X, Number 4, 1973-74.

Table 15

Fall quarter, 1974; winter quarter, 1975; spring quarter, 1975

Enrollment Figures for Skills Center and Satellites

	GC 1401	GC 1405	GC 1409	GC 1429	Walk-in contacts	Total Students registered	Total Number of credits
Fall, 1974							
GC daytime		44	11	0	440	55	153
Extension Classes		23	19	16	25	58	123
Stillwater		11	5			16	43
Workhouse					55		
Madelia			5			5	40
Pilot City		8				8	24
St. Paul		24				24	72
Winter, 1975							
GC daytime		50	19	3	390	72	195
Extension Classes		24	26	29	30	79	157
Stillwater	13		8			21	55
Workhouse					56		
Madelia			4			4	32
Pilot City			3			3	6
St. Paul		21				21	63
Spring, 1975							
GC daytime		53	17	6	300*	76	207
Extension Classes		29	20	25	40*	74	177
Stillwater	3*	10*	5*			18*	49*
Workhouse					55*		
Madelia			4			4	32
Pilot City							
St. Paul	—	35*	—	—	—	35*	105*
TOTAL	16	332	146	79	1391	538	1533

*Estimated

Appendix I:

Skills Center Special Funding Projects

Since its inception as an experimental effort to enhance the educational opportunities of General College students, the Reading/ Writing Skills Center has developed in several ways. While its main base of operation is still in the General College on the University campus, its services are available through satellite centers at many off-campus sites. Throughout the period of its growth, the Skills Center was fortunate in the support that it received from various sources. Its initial impetus was provided by the Arts, Communication, and Philosophy (ACP) Division of the General College, which committed funds to the original pilot project. Not long after, the project won all-College approval, and the Skills Center became a continuing student support service of the ACP Division.

As noted in another section of this report, early in its existence the Skills Center established ties with the University's CEE. In subsequent GC/CEE joint projects, CEE provided a part of the Skills Center funding, most notably for the establishment of satellite Skills Centers. Aside from the generous support of the General College and CEE, the Skills Center has also sought funds for experimentation and innovation from various other sources. Described briefly below are some Skills Center efforts to seek, and sometimes to obtain, outside support funds.

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1. Spring Quarter, 1974--Tutor Training Project

(Proposal Submitted to University's Small Grants Program)

Proposed: $2,275.00

Received: $2,282.98

The Skills Center Tutor Training Project consisted of recruiting eight University of Minnesota freshmen and sophomore students and training them as Skills Center tutors. One aim of the project was to create a pool of trained undergraduates who might subsequently become part-time Skills Center tutors.

Another intent of the project was to train tutors who in some respects had ethnic-cultural characteristics similar to those of many patrons of the General College Skills Center. The trainees selected were generally higher than average in scholastic ability and were highly motivated toward social service. One result of the tutor-training

project was that five trainees became members of the 1974-75 Skills Center staff. (A full report of this project is on file in the Skills Center office.[4])

2. Summer, 1974--Orientation Videotape Project

(Proposal Submitted to the University of Minnesota Media Production Fund)

Proposed: $1,950.55

Production facilities of Rarig Center, including the services of a producer, cameramen, artists, film editors, etc.

Received: $ 248.00

Production facilities of Rarig Center, including the services of a producer, cameramen, artists, film editors, etc.

Since one of the time consuming tasks of the Skills Center staff is the orientation of individual student-patrons, some members of the staff expressed a desire for a videotape of the orientation process. Accordingly, a plan for the production of such a tape was devised and a request for financial aid was submitted to the University's Media Production Fund. Though the Media Production Fund, in keeping with its established policy, could not allocate salary money for the project, it did fund the Skills Center's request for studio facilities, technical assistance, production assistance, and materials. With the aid of the Media Production Fund's grant, two orientation videotapes were produced during the summer of 1974. The tapes were used to orient students throughout the subsequent academic year. (A report on this project is in preparation.)

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[4]Vernelle E. Kurak, "Report on the Spring, 1974, Tutor Training Project."

3. Summer, 1974--Orientation Videotape Project

(Proposal Submitted to the University of Minnesota Small Grants Program)

Proposed: $1,657.60

Received: $1,802.36

Since the Media Production Fund could not supply summer salary money for Skills Center staff members working on the Summer, 1974 videotape project, the Skills Center submitted a request for salary funds to the University's Small Grants program. With the funds received, three members of the Skills Center staff were employed part-time to write and produce the orientation videotapes.

4. July, 1974 to June, 1975, Stillwater Prison Skills Center

(Proposal Submitted to U.S. Higher Education Act, Title I)

Proposed: $9,421.00

Received: $9,421.00

The purpose of this Title I project was to establish a Skills Center at Stillwater State Prison, Bayport, Minnesota. Liaison was established and a Skills Center program was organized with the cooperation of the Stillwater Prison administration during the period July 1, 1974, to September 15, 1974. The Skills Center began offering its services to inmates in September of 1974; operations continued throughout the 1974-75 academic year. (See Part III of this report for details of the Skills Center activities at Stillwater.)

5. Auto-Instructional Materials

(Proposal Submitted to the University of Minnesota Development Grants Program)

Proposed: $4,495.00

Received: $3,460.00

In an effort to integrate personal one-to-one tutoring with the use of auto-instructional materials, Skills Center staff members plan to write and produce a series of audio-tapes during the summer of 1975. (Project funded but not yet begun at the time of this writing.)

6. Skills Center for the Stillwater Prison and the St. Cloud Reformatory

(Proposal Submitted to The Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control)

Proposed: $45,792.00

Received: $31,333.00

A joint effort by the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center and CEE Community Programs, this project has two objectives: to continue and to expand the Skills Center program at Stillwater Prison (funded in its initial year by the U.S. Higher Education Act, Title I); and to establish a Skills Center program at St. Cloud Reformatory.

7. Skills Center for the Stillwater Prison

(Proposal Submitted to the Higher Education Act, Title I)

Proposed: $15,837.00

Received: $15,837.00

A joint proposal by the General College Reading/Writing Skills Center and CEE Community Programs, this grant application is for the purpose of continuing and expanding second-year funding for the Stillwater Prison Skills Center.

Appendix II:

Anecdotal Material

Since evening Extension students sometimes make use of the daytime GC Skills Center, the staff routinely requested that these "switched" students identify themselves when they came into the Skills Center during the day. Staff members stopped making this request after an Extension student made it a habit to bound through the Skills Center door shouting, "I'm an Extension student."

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Each quarter brings its contingent of foreign students to the Skills Center. A typical group of daytime walk-ins, for instance, includes an Israeli graduate student in the College of Education, a Chinese graduate student studying for an MA in Chemistry, and a Swedish undergraduate working as a domestic to pay for her year's study in the United States. Strangely enough, Skills Center staff members note that the influx of students seems to follow a pattern. One quarter brings a number of Chinese to the Center; another quarter results in a concentration of Middle Eastern students. Staff members speculate that foreign student groups on campus are so closely knit that news of Skills Center services is passed along quickly by word of mouth.

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The evening Extension Classes Skills Center has among its clients two Turkish students, one of whom had been in the U.S. only two weeks when she first came to the Skills Center. The other Turkish student, the wife of a doctor on the staff of the University Medical School staff, was better acquainted with the U.S. and its language, but she wanted to improve her use of English idiom. The new arrival from Istanbul began with an English vocabulary of some fifty words, which made her the Skills Center's most difficult case. Notwithstanding the fact that no member of the Skills Center staff knows any Turkish, the young lady is following a regimen prescribed by Skills Center staff: one night a week in the Skills Center practicing English conversation; frequent listening to English language tapes at the Walter Library Resource Center; and watching television six hours a day.

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One of the female Newgate students who had enrolled in a Skills Center program during fall quarter, 1974, recently escorted a newly arrived resident of the Project Newgate House for Women Offenders

into the Skills Center to help enroll in a Skills Center activity. While familiarizing the new student with the services of the Skills Center, the experienced female Newgate student inquired about the possibility of working for credit as a Skills Center tutor. The details of such an arrangement should be worked out in the near future. In addition to the obvious benefit such an arrangement would bring to the Skills Center, the student's experiences as a tutor may give her an opportunity to formulate values and attitudes supportive of her educational goals.

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Since the Skills Center's activities have ramifications among many University and community groups, the Skills Center Coordinator often finds it necessary to untangle the snarls of various bureaucracies. The establishment of a five-credit course in Beginning Ojibwe in Stillwater Prison, for instance, included such activities as obtaining funding from the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (which meant contacting three separate tribal offices); identifying and recruiting a qualified native speaker of Ojibwe and an assistant for her; establishing liaison with authorities in the Minnesota Department of Corrections; consulting various concerned American Indian groups; identifying potential students among the inmates at Stillwater; arranging for classroom facilities and materials; establishing payroll procedures; registering students in AmIn 1021 through the University's Extension Classes; and serving as a courier between students and University offices (carrying endorsed checks). Other details are too numerous to mention.

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Two of the 1974-75 clients of the Skills Center were functionally illiterate. In each case, their reading problem was identified after they came into the Skills Center complaining of an "inadequate vocabulary" and/or "a spelling problem." After consultation with other General College faculty members, the Skills Center staff helped the students enroll in the following program of courses designed to improve their linguistic skills:

GC 1401: Vocabulary Building (regular GC class)

GC 1402: Reading Development (regular GC class)

GC 1405: Fundamentals of Usage and Style (Skills Center)

GC 1409: Individual Study (Skills Center)

In addition to doing the class assignments, each student spent five or six hours a week working with a Skills Center staff member. The object is to improve the students' language proficiency so that they can successfully cope with reading and writing assignments in other GC courses.

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One of the functions that the Skills Center seems to perform is to consolidate student-University connections which otherwise might be very tenuous. A case in point is the girl who was registered for one General College course by correspondence through the Independent Study department. By chance she visited the Skills Center and asked for help on one of the written assignments for her correspondence course. Subsequently she became a regular patron of the Skills Center, and she is now making plans to enroll in the General College for a full-time program.

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The inauguration of a program for Spanish-speaking people from the Madelia, Minnesota area resulted, among other things, in the Skills Center acquiring the services of some talented bi-lingual instructors. As part of the Madelia project, for instance, the Skills Center employs a suburban housewife with a MA in Spanish to teach English one day a week. In the same project, an assistant professor in the ACP division devotes some of his time to teaching the students American folk and pop songs as a means of introducing them to American English idiom. To provide the Madelia students practice in the use of spoken English, another ACP staff member adapted a regular General College speech course to suit the particular needs of non-native English speakers.

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Some recent and memorable Skills Center clients:

The chain-smoking, emphysema-ridden, down-at-the-heels student who bragged about being an undercover "Narc."

The patient from the University Hospitals who left his ward every morning to come to the Skills Center to expound upon his novel theories about English spelling.

The student whose Individual Study project was on snakes. For his final project report, he brought into the Skills Center a mouse, a rat, and an eight-foot python. While the student cogently described

the care and feeding of pythons, the snake methodically lunched, first on the mouse, and then on the unsuspecting rat.

The bank examiner student who routinely asked Skills Center tutors not to repeat any information contained in his papers; who would glance furtively around him before taking his research out of his dispatch case; and who would proceed to discuss it sotto voce with the tutor.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

AUG 15 1975

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